

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 09260 030341Z

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7502

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM CONSTABLE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PK, PFOR, US
SUBJECT: REPROCESSING PLANT

1. IN THE ABSENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR, WHO IS ON LEAVE,
I WAS CALLED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY TODAY TO SEE ACTING FOREIGN
SECRETARY SHAHNAWAZ. HE SAID HE HAD DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS
FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PASS A MESSAGE TO THE
AMBASSADOR AND, SINCE THE AMBASSADOR WAS NOT AVAILABLE,
HE HAD ASKED TO SEE ME.

2. SHAHNAWAZ SAID THAT WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE
SECRETARY DISCUSSED THE REPROCESSING ISSUE IN LAHORE,
THEY BOTH AGREED THEY SHOULD ATTEMPT TO SEE THAT THIS
MATTER RECEIVED AS LITTLE PUBLICITY AS POSSIBLE IN THE
WEEKS AHEAD. SINCE THE SECRETARY LEFT, HOWEVER, THERE
HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE OF THE REPROCESSING ISSUE
NOT ONLY IN THE AMERICAN MEDIA BUT IN OTHER COUNTRIES
AS WELL, ALTHOUGH PAKISTAN HAD DONE WHAT IT COULD
TO CONTAIN MEDIA REACTION HERE. THE PRIME MINISTER NOW
UNDERSTANDS THAT AN ARTICLE ON REPROCESSING, WRITTEN
BY ACDA DIRECTOR IKLE, WILL APPEAR IN A FRENCH MAGAZINE
(HE WAS NOT SURE WHICH ONE) EITHER THIS WEEKEND OR
EARLY NEXT WEEK. ACCORDING TO SHAHNAWAZ, IKLE MAKES THE
SECRET

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FOLLOWING POINTS IN THE ARTICLE: A) THERE IS NO ECONOMIC

JUSTIFICATION FOR PAKISTAN TO ACQUIRE A REPROCESSING PLANT. B) THE US SUCCEEDED WITH SOUTH KOREA IN CONVINCING IT TO FOREGO THE REPROCESSING PLANT BUY AND WILL CONTINUE TO PRESSURE PAKISTAN TO GIVE UP ITS PURCHASE. C) SOUTH KOREA HAD A GREATER JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PLANT THAN DOES PAKISTAN. D) IRAN'S NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IS RATIONAL AND JUSTIFIED AND, BY IMPLICATION, PAKISTAN'S IS NOT. SHAHNAWAZ SAID THE PRIME MINISTER APPRECIATED THE DIFFICULTIES IN KEEPING OUR PRESS FROM MAKING ADVERSE COMMENTS, BUT HE BELIEVED IT WAS INCONSISTENT WITH THE SECRETARY'S UNDERSTANDING WITH BHUTTO FOR USG OFFICIALS TO HARP ON THE ISSUE PUBLICLY AT THIS DELICATE STAGE. AT THE CLOSE OF THE CONVERSATION I TOLD SHAHNAWAZ I WOULD IMMEDIATELY REPORT THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE TO THE AMBASSADOR AND THE DEPARTMENT.

3. IF THE PAKISTANI REPORT OF THE IKLE ARTICLE IS ACCURATE, I THINK WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE CAN TO HAVE IT WITHDRAWN. AS YOU KNOW, THE PRIME MINISTER IS VERY SENSITIVE ON THE ISSUE OF PUBLICITY OVER THE REPROCESSING PLANT PURCHASE AND IF A HIGH RANKING USG OFFICIAL IS, ON THE PUBLIC RECORD, CRITICAL OF THE BUY, IT WILL ONLY FURTHER EXACERBATE OUR DIFFICULTIES IN REACHING A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. I WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE GUIDANCE ON WHAT MESSAGE WE CAN PASS BACK TO SHAHNAWAZ.

BYROADE

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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